



# FÍA Newsletter



## Coast Guard's Pillar under attack

Plans to sell the Coast Guard's aircraft - CLA with Flightschools  
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CAPT. JÓN ÞÓR ÞORVALDSSON, FÍA PRESIDENT

## Rule of Law upended



Dear pilots,

It is customary at the beginning of the year to look over the past and at the same time look to the future. We can appreciate the good that has been achieved and decide to learn from what could be done better. Hopefully, the good is dominant in all of our lives.

The airline industry is rapidly recovering and is approaching the scale it was before Covid and its resulting indiscriminate mess and confusion of politics and officials. We see our airlines expanding their schedules and availability of flights from last year, which is pleasing. Likewise, it is extremely important to see that all those, who lost their job due to the pandemic, will be back at work this spring. It would have been better if this had been achieved earlier, but good news nevertheless, and a year earlier than initially presumed.

Various research and experts predict that there will be a severe shortage of pilots in many parts of the world in the future, a problem that we will face for at least 10 years. Therefore, it can be assumed that there will be growth and recruitment by air carriers in the coming years, with other things remaining the same. It will also be important for the airlines to have the loyalty of FÍA pilots as it has been so far. It has been the key to the positive and safe turnaround of companies to have a good collective agreement, seniority list and reliable staff who have been prepared when necessary. Even though at times the optimization requirements and utilization strategy have gone quite far. We see that the companies that have gone the furthest in "Excel-controlled" human resources have not fared better than those that try to find the middle ground. We see many examples of this.

It is my opinion that the past few seasons have been a stress test for us pilots, our companies and the infrastructure of the aviation industry. It has tested people's ability to communicate constructively. It has put a huge strain on all of us in finding ways to overcome all the challenges that have arisen. But it is safe to say that we have passed that test. There are more tests ahead that are related to further development and competitiveness in the ever-changing world of aviation. But these constant challenges and the sensitivity of the industry in which we work are precisely one of the things that make it such an interesting and sought-after career field.

I would like to commend all of us for our solidarity, now as before. Solidarity is the key to our success and has been a model for other interest groups for decades. It would be optimal if all commercial pilots in Iceland were united under the banner of FÍA.

We have good colleagues and friends who work for Play, which are currently working under the banner of another union. I believe that their interests and those of us who are members of FÍA would be best served in one association where we would fight together for the interests of pilots. Fight for professional issues such as safety, fight for better conditions, against social dumping, artificial contracting and provide the necessary restraint to the government and institutions. Hopefully it can happen before long.

**Speaking of giving restraint to governments and institutions, the need for this has repeatedly become apparent to us. Most recently in the unprecedented and the inexcusable decision of the Minister of Justice to sell one of the pillars of the Icelandic Coast Guard, its only search and rescue aircraft, without being authorized by law.**

Nevertheless, the Minister made this decision, along with a message to lay off relevant employees. The executive branch of the government is going to send a note to the legislative branch that it needs to pass a law that supports this arbitrary decision of the minister! The rule of law has been turned upside down! The board of FÍA has issued a resolution on this action, which can be read in this newsletter.

The annual general meeting of FÍA will be held at 20:00 on February 16th, at the Reykjavík Hotel Grand. There we will elect a vice-president as well as 3 members of the board. I hope that as many of us as possible will be able to attend. It is an important part of our work to meet at such gatherings, exchange opinions and strengthen bonds and union awareness.

Sincerely,  
Jón Þór Þorvaldsson



FÍA'S RESOLUTION REGARDING THE MINISTER OF JUSTICE'S DECISION TO

## TF-SIF, THE AIRCRAFT OF THE ICELANDIC COAST GUARD

On February 1, the Minister of Justice announced that he had decided to stop the operation of the specially equipped aircraft of the Icelandic Coast Guard (LHG,) TF-SIF. The decision entails that the sale process of the plane should be commenced and that the pilots of the plane should be immediately dismissed.

**It is the opinion of FÍA that the minister's decision is indefensible and illegal for several reasons. The decision is indefensible with regard to Iceland's international obligations and cooperation of the state with other states and does not pass the test of international law.**

**The decision weighs on the national security policy of the Republic of Iceland and it is clear that there has been no consultation with Alþingi. In light of this, it can be expected that the minister also did not inform the National Security Council of his plans before he went to work and thus failed in his duties according to the law on the National Security Council.**

Nowhere is it stated how the minister intends to fulfill the government's obligations regarding safety and rescue at sea in accordance with Iceland's international obligations, agreements with other countries and the provisions of Icelandic law. The Coast Guard cannot fulfill its duties according to the Coast Guard Act and international obligations without a specially equipped aircraft, as we are an island nation with a search and rescue area of 1.9 million square kilometers and approx. 700 nautical miles are from Reykjavík Airport in the NE & SW corners that mark the outer limits of the area on each side.

Iceland is responsible for security and law enforcement, search and rescue in this area. Not having a specially equipped aircraft like TF-SIF available to search such a large area, where traffic both of planes and ships is high, and continues to increase e.g. with increased traffic both entertainment travel exchanges and cargo ships, is completely unacceptable and obviously weighs against national security and the international obligations of the Icelandic state.

Neither the law on the Coast Guard nor the law on air travel contains the authority to delegate the agency's duties for security and law enforcement at sea in accordance with Iceland's international obligations, agreements with other nations and the provisions of the law.

The minister's reasons for his decision to sell the Coast Guard's aircraft appear to be primarily rationalizations in the state's finances, but as has been stated by the opposition parties, the situation in parliament does not authorise the sale of TF-SIF in the newly approved state budget. Also, no calculations have been submitted by the minister that show what the optimisation consists of, or whether it would be possible to operate the aircraft in a more favourable manner. Regarding the expensive operation of the plane, it is clear that no law enforcement is run for profit, and the reason that the plane has been leased across the oceans is that there has not been funding in the budget to have the plane in the country all months of the year, despite the state's obligations to have it available .

Regarding the lack of authorization for the sale, FÍA points out that according to the constitution, payments and the selling of property from the state treasury are not authorised unless so stated in the budget or supplements to the budget. It has become clear that there was no legal authorisation for the sale of TF SIF, and no discussion took place in Alþingi regarding the sale. It is therefore clear that the minister does not have the authority to make this decision alone and without authorization from Alþingi.

**The dismissal of the plane's pilots without such authorization can only be interpreted as a cruel attack on the employees of the Coast Guard. The pilot redundancies are furthermore in violation of FÍA's collective agreement with the Icelandic Coast Guard, and the seniority rules that are part of that collective agreement.**

**FÍA will protect their jobs and turn to the Labour Court if necessary.**

# LANDMARK CLA WITH THE FLIGHT SCHOOLS



Mynd: HBÓ

The old collective agreement ran out at the beginning of 2020, and the flight schools have therefore had their grace period due to the Covid-19 pandemic, just like other air operators got,” explains Högni Björn Ómarsson, secretary of FÍA who is the chairman of the negotiation committee. “The validity period of the new agreement ends in 2028, but it is possible to have such a long agreement period by using index-based criteria to ensure annual purchase increases, and in addition, the parties to the agreement plan to meet annually to assess the impact of the changes made to the old agreement .”

This is a landmark agreement, but for the first time flight instructors will have a collective agreement that is completely tailored to their working conditions and the needs of both them and the flight schools. “At one time, the basic contract for flight instructors was based on older versions of FÍA’s contracts with airlines, and therefore there were provisions that did not apply to instructional flights. This time it was possible to get the parties to the agreement to the table who were able to devote time to a complete review of all clauses, bookings, and declarations. It was a pleasure, but it certainly took time, and hopefully the flight instructors think that the wait was worth it,” says Högni.

“With the agreement, the flight schools also get better access to a larger group of pilots who can pass on their knowledge and experience, not only because better terms are now available, but also because the bifurcation of the agreement gives flight schools the authority to have full-

time permanent teachers or part-time, but also freelance where applicable.”

Högni says that the new collective agreement for flight instructors guarantees that FÍA members receive normal wages, along with the additional rights that FÍA membership brings to flight instructors.

Special benefits will be offered by FÍA for flight instructors who choose to insure themselves even better than stipulated in the collective agreement, and then FÍA’s Health Fund will cover the expenses for regular medical examinations of flight instructors who would otherwise have to bear those costs themselves.

“Flight instructors, like other professional pilots, are of course welcome in FÍA, and with the new collective agreement, their membership should be the most natural thing in the world,” says Högni. “Similarly, everyone who operates a flight school should enter into an agreement with FÍA and work together to show the work of flight instructors the respect it deserves.”

**„This is a landmark agreement, but for the first time flight instructors will have a collective agreement that is completely tailored to their working conditions and the needs of both them and the flight schools.“**

# COAST GUARD PILOTS

**still without a collective labour agreement**



**„FÍA will continue to ensure that aviation safety is a top priority, but in the company’s opinion, various basic aspects of the CLA negotiations have already been solved, and it should be possible to conclude agreements or at least extend the current agreement.“**

Matters regarding the Icelandic Coast Guard are complicated in more than one area, but its pilots have been without a collective labour agreement for over three years. After a meeting with the minister earlier this winter, it looked like progress was being made, but unfortunately there was another setback in the negotiations just before Christmas.

FÍA continues to look for all possible means to reach an agreement with the State’s Contracts Committee and holds on to the hope that it will be reached sooner rather than later, as it is unacceptable how slowly negotiations have progressed and how much resistance the LHG pilots have met.

FÍA will continue to ensure that aviation safety is a top priority, but in the company’s opinion, various basic aspects of wage negotiations have already reached a solution and it should be possible to conclude agreements or at least extend the current agreement.

FÍA is waiting for the next steps from the state mediator.

Last week, the battle shifted to a fight for the right to exist for the pilots of the aircraft TF-SIF at the Coast Guard due to the decision of the Minister of Justice to stop the operation of the Coast Guard’s specially equipped aircraft.

As discussed in this newsletter, FÍA issued a resolution regarding the decision, which the association considers both indefensible and illegal for many reasons. Following the resolution, FÍA representatives were called to a meeting of the Alþingi’s budget committee, but the chairman of the committee has strongly criticized the minister’s decision and pointed out that it was taken without authorization from Alþingi, as required by law.

In light of discussions in the media over the past few days, it is expected that the decision will be withdrawn and that negotiations can continue.

**POSITIVE ATTITUDE  
Lunch Lecture  
wed. 22. February  
12:00 o’clock**

The Educational and Training Fund is organising an interesting Lunch Lecture, on Wednesday, 22. February in Hlíðasmári 8.

**Ásgeir Jónsson** from Takmarkalaust líf will visit us and give a lecture on positivity and attitudes - how to deal with life and the personal life.



# HOLIDAY COTTAGE FUND

- **Good utilisation ratio this summer**



Vinnu við nýja húsið í Húsafelli miðar vel áfram

Dear colleagues.

As most of you will know, FÍA's Holiday Cottage Fund (Skýjaborgir) has 5 cottages. Four of them were in operation in 2022. The utilization was very good, with almost 80% of weekends rented out on an annual basis, and the summer weeks had 93% utilization. There are 240 FÍA members for each cottage. It is common for other unions to have 4-500 members per house.

## New house in Húsafell

The new house we've been constructing in Húsafell is almost complete, and we had been hoping that it will be ready in the first quarter of 2023. However, it is uncertain whether this will be achieved, as the building has been delayed, e.g. due to gaps in the supply chain.

The house is at Gráhraun 2, you drive past the turnoff to the hotel for approx. 700 meters and turn left into the new holiday cottage neighborhood that has been planned there. It is worth noting that in this part of the neighborhood there are approximately 40 houses, but only 2 are owned by unions. The cottage is 88 m<sup>2</sup> with a 20 m<sup>2</sup> guest house. This is our first cottage that comes with a guest house.

## New website in the pipelines

Our holiday cottage website, [orlof.is/fia](http://orlof.is/fia), is becoming quite out of date, and does not work well on smart devices. A new website is in the pipelines, but as is often the case, implementation has been somewhat delayed. We encourage all members to take a good look around the website and e.g. not everyone knows about the "traveler's check" (is. ferðaaðvísun) tab, where you will find hotels where we offer quite good subsidies for stays. The supply of hotels changes regularly, for example we just added Hotel Sigló in Siglufjörður for the winter.

## Clean after yourselves

Finally, it has been a tradition to be scold you about how our vacation homes are treated. It is normal for something to break or bend, and we ask that you let us know so that we can respond adequately and fix things. However, it is not normal to hear about poorly cleaned houses, and unfortunately we have had to buy cleaning services several times as the cottages were left in a deplorable state.

**It is the tenant's responsibility to return the house well cleaned.**

We remind you of our email address [skyjaborgir@fia.is](mailto:skyjaborgir@fia.is)



LONG AND SUCCESSFUL CAREER!

# LONG AND SUCCESSFUL CAREER!

## FÍA's Retirement Party

FÍA recently held a retirement party for recently retired pilots. The group of pilots was unusually large as such an event couldn't take place during the Covid-19 epidemic. FÍA wishes them all a happy retirement, with thanks for their contribution to Icelandic aviation.



### Icelandair

Pétur Arnarsson  
Úlfar Henningsson  
Atli Baldvin Unnsteinsson  
Helgi Þorsteinsson  
Leifur Árnason  
Þorsteinn Guðmundsson  
Áki Snorrason  
Ásgeir Sigurðsson  
Ármann Sigurðsson  
Þórarinn Hjálmarsson  
Steinar Steinarsson  
Kristján Óskarsson

Franz Ploder  
Sigríður Einarsdóttir  
Þórir Brynjúlfsson

### Flugfélagið

Ragnar Smári Ólafsson  
Tryggvi Jónsson

### LHG

Hafsteinn Heiðarsson

### Atlanta

Albert Baldursson  
Hrafn Hauksson  
Jóhann Þórisson  
Kyrre Geir Nilsen  
Stefán P. Þorbergsson  
Örn Gunnarsson  
Brynjólfur Sigurbjörnsson  
Stefán Þórisson  
Sveinn Einarsson



## A PIONEER RETIRES

There is good reason to mention Captain Sigríður Einarsdóttir in particular, among those now retiring. Sigríður was the first woman hired by Icelandair as a commercial pilot, and therefore also the first woman to become a commercial pilot in Iceland.

She has held various positions of trust within the Union, among which was to be the first woman to sit on the board of FÍA, but she was also on the board of the Sickness Fund and the Shop Steward Council.

She is now retiring after a long and successful career, a great role model for all and trailblazer in many ways.





# PILOTS AND MEDICINE

Like everyone else, most pilots have a need of medication for either a shorter or longer period of time. In the past, more types of medication were banned, but it has since been shown that many of those had no effect on flight safety.

When starting to take medication, it is important to consider whether there are any underlying problems, that can affect a pilot's ability to fly. Often it is the disease itself rather than the medication that makes a pilot unable to fly.

Some diseases have little effect on the ground but can have a significant effect at high altitudes.

The effects and side-effects of medicines must be taken into account, and it should also be kept in mind that some side effects can appear late. The general rule is to wait to fly for 2 weeks after starting intake or increasing the dose of a medication, although some require a longer waiting time. It is important that pilots seek information from an aeromedical examiner about whether the medication is allowed. Sometimes it is necessary to insert a restriction in the health certificate, if the pilot is taking a certain type of medicine.

The most common class of drugs that pilots are not allowed to take, are ones that affect the central nervous system or the autonomic system. These can also affect certain senses or cause toxic effects in organs.

- Dr. Atli Einarsson, aeromedical examiner



# PILOTS AND MEDICINE

## Below is information on the main classes of medicine:

### High blood pressure medicine:

There are five main classes of blood pressure medicine that pilots are allowed to take. It is important that the person is under supervision, because some of the drugs can cause salt imbalance, among other things. In exceptional cases, other drugs are used that are prohibited, for example, some alpha blockers.

### Antibiotics:

If a pilot needs to use antibiotics, it is likely they have some kind of infection and therefore it is likely that they shouldn't fly. Sometimes antibiotics are used for a long time and so each case needs to be evaluated individually. Malaria drugs are used for preventive purposes and most of them are allowed, but one of them, Lariam, affects the central nervous system and is therefore not allowed.

### Painkillers:

Milder painkillers, such as paracetamol and NSAIDs (Voltaren, Ibuprofen), are allowed. Long-term use or high doses, on the other hand, can have serious side effects. Stronger drugs such as codeine and morphine drugs affect the central nervous system and are prohibited.

### Diabetes medication:

Insulin is prohibited. Medications used for type 2 diabetes are of several types and some can cause hypoglycemia and are therefore not allowed. Some drugs are allowed on their own but not with other drugs. It is important that pilots with diabetes are monitored, as diabetes is a strong risk factor for cardiovascular disease.

### Asthma medicine:

Most types of asthma medicine is allowed to control symptoms. It is important to emphasize that oral steroids are not allowed. Cough medicine is not allowed.

### Psychotropic medications:

Psychotropic medications are generally prohibited as they affect the central nervous system and often have unwanted side effects for pilots. In exceptional cases, SSRI type antidepressants are allowed to prevent a disease from reoccurring. All attention deficit drugs are prohibited.

### Sleeping pills:

Are allowed for occasional problems, but care must be taken to ensure that their effects have completely left the system before flying again. Drugs with a short half-life should be chosen, e.g. Imovane, if medicine is used the night before a flight. This means that the drugs must be taken more than 8 hours before flying. The underlying reasons for chronic insomnia need to be examined.

### Antihistamines:

Some antihistamines can make you drowsy, particularly older types that are rarely used. Examples of newer types that are allowed are Claritin, Loritin and Telfast. It is worth pointing out that these drugs are also available in other pharmaceutical forms than tablets, e.g. as nasal sprays and eye drops.

### Gastrointestinal medicine:

Medications for gastritis and reflux are allowed, but it is important to have a correct diagnosis before starting use.

### Smoking medicine:

Medications to stop smoking affect the central nervous system and are therefore not allowed. Nicotine is allowed when used to quit smoking.

### Hormonal drugs:

Are allowed, but some of them increase the risk of blood clots, so it is important to examine other risk factors before starting to use such drugs. The risk of blood clots increases primarily during flights of more than 8 hours. It is important to drink well and exercise regularly during such a flight.

### Drugs for enlarged prostate:

Two classes of drugs are mainly used, and both are allowed. Care must be taken with selective alpha 1 blockers, e.g. Tamsulin, as they can cause a drop in blood pressure, especially if the person is also taking blood pressure medicine. 5 alpha reductase blockers such as Proscar, however, have fewer side effects.

- Dr. Atli Einarsson, aeromedical examiner





# AGM & CANDIDATES

The Annual General Meeting of the Icelandic Airline Pilots' Association (FÍA) will be held at 20:00 on Thursday, 16. February this year. The meetings is held at the Hotel Reykjavík Grand ("Grand Hotel") in Sigtún, Reykjavík.

The meeting will elect a vice-president of the association along with three board members. Given how many have announced their candidacy, the candidates are self-elected. The candidate for vice-president is the current vice-president of FÍA, Guðmundur Már Þorvarðarson. Candidates for the board are Jóhannes Jóhannesson, G. Birnir Ásgeirsson and Haraldur Helgi Óskarsson

We encourage all FÍA members to attend!

## Candidate for Vice-President



### GUÐMUNDUR MÁR ÞORVARÐARSON Captain at Icelandair

Dear colleagues,

I have decided to run again for vice-president of FÍA. I have held that position for the past few years or since the middle of 2017, and have served on the board of FÍA since the AGM in February of 2014. I was FÍA's treasurer for just over a year or until I took over the position of vice-president. During this time, since 2014, I have been a member of the collaboration committee and also participated in the negotiation of collective labour agreements with the various partners of FÍA, as well as being a member of the Shop Steward Council.

I am a family man and I live in Hafnarfjörður and I have worked for Icelandair since 2005.

Behind us are extremely challenging times for all of us who work in the aviation industry. We, who work on behalf of FÍA and its members have not been spared from that and various

projects that we had planned have unfortunately had to give way to the challenges we faced when the pandemic hit.

That is why I have decided to offer my services again, i.e. to continue the work that had just commenced at the beginning of 2020, where the intention was to work on strategy and finding ways to streamline and facilitate work processes within FÍA and further enhance the level of service to its members.

I would like to thank you for the support and you have shown in recent years, and I also thank you for your trust in the next two years. Looking forward to seeing as many of you as possible at the general meeting on February 16th.

With best regards  
Guðmundur Már Þorvarðarson

# Board Member Candidate

## HARALDUR HELGI ÓSKARSSON

### Captain at Air Atlanta

I have decided to run for a continued position on the board. I started flying in 1999 at Íslandsflug and then that same year moved to Atlanta where I work as a Captain today. I also took a year's unpaid leave from Atlanta and then flew as a Captain at Flugfélag Íslands.

My experience with union matters is long and varied. I was on the board of the Frjálsa Flugmannafélagið (FFF) union and also served as its president for a while. There I gained experience in negotiation, company council work along with many other issues. Towards the end of that union, I took part in the merging of FFF and FÍA, which I think went rather well. In continuation of this work, I sat on the board of FÍA, worked on negotiations along with company council work.

I then took a break from union work, but returned in the last election term to a board seat after being in the background during the drafting of CLAs that were signed in 2020. My experience in this therefore spans over a decade.

It is important that this work is carried out diligently, and I have had a very successful collaboration with the current board (and staff) as well as with Björn from AAI. Over the past two years, we have challenged the waves together in

difficult situations, it truly takes its toll on people to varying degrees, and my colleagues on the board deserve praise for their hard work and energy.

I'm also thankful for the good collaboration we've had with the people at Air Atlanta, because even though we've had issues, we've managed to solve them in we have been able to solve them well, even if it doesn't happen overnight. For Air Atlanta's future, we anticipate an increase in the number of pilots, and we need to pay careful attention to the implementation of that, along with so many other important things that arise.

I would like to encourage our younger members to show hard work and courage and step more firmly into union affairs, here we must also have a renewal of personnel. In a little over two years, we are looking forward to negotiating a new collective agreement, and it would be nice to see younger pilots step in after having worked with us before and getting to know the company's work.

Finally, I would like to thank the goodwill I have felt in the group and the trust shown to me.



# Board Member Candidate

## G. BIRNIR ÁGEIRSSON

### Captain at Air Atlanta

I am a family man and live in Seltjarnarnes. I have worked for Air Atlanta for over 20 years and have worked for FÍA for most of that. I've been a board member of FÍA for the past 2 years, been on the Company Council and the Negotiations Committee of FÍA with Air Atlanta, negotiating for the last two collective labour agreements to name a few.

The past 2 years have been challenging in union matters and I want to continue to do my part to tackle all the challenging tasks that FÍA and the air operators have faced.

I would therefore like to continue working for FÍA and hope for the support of the members in this regard.





# Board Member Candidate

## JÓHANNES JÓHANNESSON

Helicopter pilot for the Icelandic Coast Guard

Dear colleagues,

I work as a pilot on the Icelandic Coast Guard's helicopters and hope for your support on February 16th. when I run for FÍA's board at the Annual General Meeting.

My flying career began in 2006 when I took my private pilot's test on a plane with Geirfugl. I got the aviation bug when I worked as a loader in summer shifts at Flugfélag Íslands in the years 2006-2009. In 2010, I completed my professional helicopter test in Norway and two years later, in 2012, I started working for Helo, flying a Bell407GX on scenic flights in Iceland. In 2014, I was hired as a pilot by the Icelandic Coast Guard (LGH), where I still work.

I have been an active member of FÍA and sat on the Shop Steward COuncil almost since the beginning of my membership there. I am also on the Safety Committee of FÍA, the Company Council and the Negotiation Committee with the Coast Guard.

Pilots at LHG have had representatives within FÍA for the last few years, which has proven to be extremely important in our defence against the government's attack on our contracts since they were released over three years ago. We would therefore be grateful to continue our presence within

the board, both for our struggle as well as to fight for all FÍA members. Our options are limited as we, Coast Guard Pilots, do not have the right to strike, and therefore it is extremely important to be a part of a powerful union like FÍA.

I believe it is important to have representatives of smaller pilot groups on the board. It ensures a better flow of information between FÍA and the pilots of smaller groups. That's why I'm very interested in putting my weight on the scales and to work for the benefit of all of us.

There is great diversity in our union, and I therefore believe it is important that the board of FÍA reflects the group of members people as best as possible. Therefore, I submit my name as a 34-year-old pilot with the hope of your support.

I am married to Abigail Jean Róbertsdóttir and we have two daughters together.

Finally, I would like to thank our members who have been on the board of FÍA for the past few years for their tireless work on our behalf.

Warm greetings,  
Johannes Johannesson

